

Flanagan's Running Club – Issue 6

Introduction

The first rule of Flanagan's Running Club is no one talks about Flanagan's Running Club!

I think I've sorted out the e-mail issues and this should now come out from my website address without any issues.

Check out the new puzzle section at the end.

Can I ask you all a favour, please can you review my book on Inkitt, and the link is below. Even if you don't take time to read it properly, please flick through a few chapters, give it ratings and a review and vote for it please. It may help me get it published.

<https://www.inkitt.com/stories/thriller/201530>

On This Day – April 18th

1506 – The cornerstone of the current St. Peter's Basilica is laid.

1906 – An earthquake and fire destroy much of San Francisco, California.

1949 – Ireland leaves the British Commonwealth and becomes the Republic of Ireland.

1980 – The Republic of Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) comes into being, with Canaan Banana as the country's first President. The Zimbabwean dollar replaces the Rhodesian dollar as the official currency.

1983 – A suicide bomber in Lebanon destroys the United States embassy in Beirut, killing 63 people.

It's Coma Patients' Day in Poland

And it's Invention Day in Japan

Mapping The London Year

1988 – The speaker's mace is damaged during poll tax debates in the House of Commons

Ron Brown MP grabbed the mace and angrily threw it to the floor. He agreed to read out a pre-written apology in the Commons but attempted to add comments of his own to it. He was suspended from Parliament for twenty days and suspended from the Labour Party for thirty days and ordered to pay £1,500 damages to pay for the repair to the mace.

Chuck D Presents This Day In Rap And Hip-Hop History

1992 – Kris Kross's "Jump" reached #1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

"Jump" is the lead single from Kris Kross's platinum selling debut album "Totally Krossed Out", released in March. Released in February, the song topped the charts in April and then stayed at #1 for a total of eight weeks, a first for a rap song.

365 – Great Stories From History For Every Day Of The Year

1521 The Diet of Worms is remembered for the clash of wills of two of history's most strong-willed men. Sitting in judgement was the young Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, only 21 but already the most powerful monarch in the long millennium between Charlemagne and Napoleon. Testifying to his faith was a German monk who defied the True Church, Martin Luther.

Luther came to Worms eager to defend himself from accusations of heresy, in spite of warnings from his friends that Worms was a town 'where his death had already been decided upon'. Begged by a supporter not to enter the city, the monk replied, 'Wenn so viel Teufel su Worms waren Siegel auf Dachern, so wollt' ich hinein.' (I am resolved to enter Worms although as many devils should set at me as there are tiles on the housetops.)

Appalled by the corruption in Rome and certain of his own principles, Luther refused to accept the absolute authority of the Church, bowing only to 'scripture and plain reason'. But Charles could not tolerate that 'a single monk, deluded by his own judgement' could presumptuously conclude 'that all Christians up till now are wrong'.

The prosecution put its case, to which the 38-year-old monk refused to agree. Finally, on this day, Luther concluded his defence with the famous words, 'Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders.' (Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise.)

Luther was condemned, but the Emperor, who had previously promised him safe conduct, refused to have him seized. Charles spent the remaining 37 years of his life unsuccessfully trying to undo what Luther had started. Luther spent the remaining 25 years of his life preaching the same 'heresy' in Protestant Germany.

Births

1947 – James Woods

1953 – Rick Moranis

1967 – Maria Bello

1971 – David Tennant

1987 – Rosie Huntington-Whiteley

Deaths

796 – Æthelred I

1955 – Albert Einstein

Number 1's

Number 1 single in 1991 - Chesney Hawkes - The One And Only

Number 1 album in 2010 - Plan B - The Defamation Of Strickland Banks

Number 1 compilation album in 1997 - Now 36

Random Results

2016 – Stoke City 0 – Tottenham Hotspur 4

1951 – Rochester Royals 73 – New York Knicks 80

2012 – Ottawa Senators 2 – New York Rangers 0

1965 – New York Mets 7 – San Francisco Giants 1

2015 – Leicester Riders 116 – Newcastle Esh Group Eagles 84

Drabble

A drabble is a complete story that is exactly one hundred words long.

Drip Drop

There was a dripping sound coming from somewhere in the house, and it was stopping him getting to sleep. He wearily dragged himself out of bed and went to investigate.

He opened the airing cupboard, and stuck his head in; the dripping wasn't coming from the boiler.

He moved to the bathroom, all the taps were dry, and there was no dripping noise from the toilet.

Then onto the kitchen, and again nothing, dry taps, and no noise.

He walked into the lounge and plunged into six feet of water.

He had forgotten that they'd had the indoor pool installed.

Joke

A man is driving down the road and breaks down near a monastery. He goes to the monastery, knocks on the door, and says, "My car broke down. Do you think I could stay the night?" The monks graciously accept him, feed him dinner, and even fix his car. As the man tries to fall asleep, he hears a strange sound. The next morning, he asks the monks what the sound was, but they say, "We can't tell you. You're not a monk." The man is disappointed but thanks them anyway and goes about his merry way. Some years later, the same man breaks down in front of the same monastery. The monks accept him, feed him, and even fix his car. That night, he hears the same strange noise that he had heard years earlier. The next morning, he asks what it is, but the monks reply, "We can't tell you. You're not a monk." The man says, "All right, all right. I'm dying to know. If the only way I can find out what that sound was is to become a monk, how do I become a monk?" The monks reply, "You must travel the Earth and tell us how many blades of grass there are and the exact number of sand pebbles. When you find these numbers, you will become a monk." The man sets about his task. Forty-five years later, he returns and knocks on the door of the monastery. He says, "I have travelled the Earth and have found what you have asked for. There are 145,236,284,232 blades of grass and 281,219,999,129,382 sand pebbles on the Earth." The monks reply, "Congratulations! You are now a monk. We shall now show you the way to the sound." The monks lead the man to a wooden door, where the head monk says, "The sound is right behind that door." The man reaches for the knob, but the door is locked. He says, "Real funny. May I have the key?" The monks give him the key, and he opens the door. Behind the wooden door is another door made of stone. The man requests the key to the stone door. The monks give him the key, and he opens it, only to find a door made of ruby. He asks for yet another key from the monks, who provide it. Behind that door is another door, this one made of sapphire. So it went until the man had gone through doors of emerald, silver, topaz, amethyst . . .

Finally, the monks say, "This is the last key to the last door." The man is relieved no end. He unlocks the door, turns the knob, and behind that door he is amazed to find the source of that strange sound. But I can't tell you what it is because . . . you're not a monk!

Random Items

Fact

In cricket an appeal for a catch or LBW decision has to be made immediately following the ball has been bowled and played at. This was not always the case, and the law was changed following this incident. In 1879 during a game the last ball of the day hit the pads of the batsman, and no appeal was made, over supper that evening the batsman remarked to WG Grace (one of the opponents) that the ball had hit him on the pads and he was stood directly in front of the stumps. As soon as the next morning's play started WG Grace shouted "Howzat" and the batsman was given out.

Firsts

The first use of Ether as an anaesthetic was in 1842 by Crawford Williamson Long
The first use of Chloroform as an anaesthetic was in 1847 by James Simpson
And in 1884 Josef Brettauer was the first to use Cocaine as a local anaesthetic, while performing an eye operation.

Thought

What's the best way to look up the spelling of a word in the dictionary if you don't know how to spell it?

Forgotten English

Zouch

An ungentle man. A Bookseller.

Ambrose Bierce's Demon's Dictionary

Armour

The kind of clothing worn by a man whose tailor is a blacksmith.

Words You Should Know

Effrontery

Cheek, insolence, as in 'He had the *effrontery* to say I never give him anything after I paid for the whole family to go on holiday last year.' Not to be confused with *affronted*, meaning offended, which is how the person uttering that last complaint might feel.

Rappers of the Nineties Trumps

Vanilla Ice
(B.1967)

During his swift rise to fame in the early '90s, Vanilla Ice became the first white rapper to top the pop singles chart with his hit *Ice Ice Baby*. After his fame began to wane, the rapper switched paths and became a professional jet-skier instead.

LYRICAL ABILITY	0	BLING	45
CRIMINALITY	62	IMPACT	01
WILDCARD: Became a professional jet-skier			01

Quote(s)

Random (very loud and extremely rapidly speaking) girl on a train.
I hadn't got time to waste speaking to them, so I told them I had to go for a poo.

A random company sent me an e-mail entitled "Reduce email overload", refusing to see the irony in sending me an unsolicited e-mail to tell me how to do this. Then they got uppity when I responded in a sarcastic manner.

Going Underground

Queensway

Formerly called Black Lion Lane, was named from the Public House once on the corner of the street. It was re-named in honour of Queen Victoria soon after she came to the throne in 1837. It is suggested that the reason was that, as a child, this was the place of Victoria's favourite horse ride; she then lived only half a mile away at Kensington Palace. It was at first called *Queen's Road*, then *Queensway* from January 1938.

The station was opened as QUEEN'S ROAD on 30 July 1900; re-named QUEENSWAY 1 September 1946.

Top Ten

The ten records to have been sampled the most times.

No	Artist	Track	Number of Times Sampled
1	The Winstons	Amen Brother	2637
2	Beside	Change The Beat	1986
3	Lyn Collins	Think (About It)	1901
4	James Brown	Funky Drummer	1410
5	Doug E Fresh And Slick Rick	La Di Da Di	860
6	James Brown	Funky President (People It's Bad)	802
7	Public Enemy	Bring The Noise	744
8	Melvin Bliss	Synthetic Substitution	725
9	The Honey Drippers	Impeach The President	723
10	Run DMC	Here We Go (Live at the Funhouse)	686

Cathedral Fact Files

Cathedral	Chichester Cathedral		
Dedicated To	Holy Trinity		
Type	Medieval	Architecture	Norman
Religion	COE	Tower / Spire	1 Spire
Site Founded	1088	Height (External)	277ft
Church Founded	1076	Height (Internal)	61ft
Bishopric Founded	681	Length	408ft
Current Bishopric Founded	1108	Width	157ft

Thirty-Three And One Third Revolutions Per Minute

Led Zeppelin – The Fourth Album

Led Zeppelin's untitled fourth album, commonly known as Led Zeppelin IV, was released on 8 November 1971 by Atlantic Records. Produced by guitarist Jimmy Page, it was recorded between November 1970 and January 1971 at several locations, most prominently the Victorian house Headley Grange.

After the band's previous album Led Zeppelin III received lukewarm reviews from critics, they decided their fourth album would officially be untitled. This, along with the inner sleeve's design featuring four symbols that represented each band member, led to the album being referred to variously as the Four Symbols logo, Four Symbols, The Fourth Album, Untitled, Runes, The Hermit, and ZoSo. In addition to lacking an album title, the cover featured no band name, as the group wished to be anonymous and to avoid easy pigeonholing by the press.

Led Zeppelin IV was a commercial and critical success, featuring many of the band's best-known songs, including "Black Dog", "Rock and Roll", "Going to California", "Stairway to Heaven", and "When the Levee Breaks". The album

is one of the best-selling albums of all time with more than 37 million copies sold. It is tied for third highest-certified album in the United States by the Recording Industry Association of America at 23x Platinum.

Three other songs from the sessions for the album, "*Down by the Seaside*", "*Night Flight*" and "*Boogie with Stu*", were included four years later on the double album *Physical Graffiti*.

The 19th-century rustic oil painting on the front of the album was purchased from an antique shop in Reading, Berkshire by Plant. The painting was then juxtaposed and affixed to the internal, papered wall of a partly demolished suburban house for the photograph to be taken. The block of flats seen on the album is "Salisbury Tower" in the Ladywood district of Birmingham, England.

The inside illustration, entitled "The Hermit" and credited to Barrington Colby MOM, was influenced by the design of the card of the same name in the Rider-Waite tarot deck. The inner painting is also referred to as View in Half or Varying Light and was sold at auction under that name in 1981.

The album was a number 1 hit on the UK album charts, and reached number 2 on the US Billboard charts, and is the biggest selling album in the US not to reach number 1. None of the tracks were released as singles in the UK at the time, though some have hit the charts in the years since digital sales came into being, yet tracks were released as singles all over the rest of the world.

Track Listing

Side one

1 - "*Black Dog*" – 4:54. Written by John Paul Jones, Jimmy Page & Robert Plant. A hell of a way to start any album, brilliant riff and drums, only stopping to allow the lyrics to be sung, which sounds like it should be all wrong but, it works brilliantly. Released as a single in the US with "*Misty Mountain Hop*" as a B-side, reaching number 15 on the Billboard Charts, also charting in Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand & Switzerland. It is a reference to a nameless, black Labrador retriever that wandered around the Headley grange studios during recording. Hit 119 in UK charts as a download in 2007. Has been covered 22 times and sampled on 25 occasions.

2 - "*Rock and Roll*" – 3:40. Written by John Bonham, Jones, Page & Plant. The most up-tempo and balls out rock track on the album. Released as a single with "*Four Sticks*" as a B-side in numerous countries, reaching number 47 on the US billboard chart and charting in Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan and Spain. Covered 25 times and sampled on 5 occasions.

3 - "*The Battle of Evermore*" – 5:51. Written by Page & Plant. Makes references to The Lord of The Rings. Showed the band's folk and blues roots and had guest lyrics from Fairport Convention's Sandy Denny. Covered 10 times and sampled on 1 occasion by Enigma who sampled most of the tracks on this album on their 1993 album "The Cross of Changes".

4 - "*Stairway To Heaven*" – 8:02. Written by Page & Plant. The Epic. The Poster for a generation of students and the most requested song in US radio history. It is the biggest selling single piece of sheet music in rock history with over a million copies sold. Never released as a single, but hit the charts in 2007 when Led Zeppelin's back catalogue was released on i-Tunes. Hit number 37 in the UK Charts, and charted in New Zealand, Norway, Ireland, US, Switzerland, Portugal, Sweden and Germany. Covered 57 times and sampled on 32 occasions, including by Rolf Harris who had a number 7 UK hit with it in 1993, and by The Far Corporation who had a Number 8 UK hit with it in 1985.

Side two

1 - "*Misty Mountain Hop*" – 4:38. Written by Jones, Page & Plant. Owes more to psychedelia than probably any other Led Zeppelin track and it works superbly. Released as a B-side to the single "*Black Dog*" in the US reaching number 15 on the Billboard Charts. Again involves a JRR Tolkien reference, this time in the title, from the Misty Mountains in The Hobbit. Covered 7 times.

2 - "*Four Sticks*" – 4:44. Written by Page & Plant. Jangling guitars, banging drums and falsetto vocals, The Darkness wished they could have done something this good. The title refers to John Bonham's performance with two sets of two drumsticks. Was the B-side to the single release of "*Rock and Roll*". Covered 5 times.

3 - "*Going To California*" – 3:31. Written by Page & Plant. A gentle folk song for the most part with some screeching rock vocals in the middle. Used in the series finale of *Entourage* where it was played throughout the show's final moments and in the post credits scene. Covered 16 times.

4 - "*When The Levee Breaks*" – 7:07. Written by Bonham, Jones, Memphis Minnie, Page & Plant. On any other album ever released, this would be the all-time epic track, with its bluesy backing and driving beat, it's a classic track that had the misfortune to be overshadowed by "*Stairway to Heaven*", yet it deserved to be held in the same esteem as a classic rock epic. A wonderful finale to an outstanding album. It is a blues song written and first recorded by husband and wife Kansas Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie in 1929. The song is in reaction to the upheaval caused by the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, and reworked by Led Zeppelin. Covered 19 times, and also sampled on 175 occasions including by The Beastie Boys, Ice T, Dre, Eminem and Scooter. Additional personnel on the album

Sandy Denny – vocals on "*The Battle of Evermore*"

Ian Stewart – piano on "*Rock and Roll*"

Barrington Colby M.O.M. – The Hermit illustration

George Chkiantz – mixing

Peter Grant – executive production

Graphbreaks – design coordination

Andy Johns – engineering, mixing

Club Fact File

Tottenham Hotspur	
Founded	1882
Turned Professional	1885
Admitted to the League	1908
Ground	Wembley
Capacity	90,000
Previous Ground(s)	Tottenham Marshes, Northumberland Park, White Hart Lane
Previous Names	Hotspur FC
Nickname(s)	Spurs, The Lilywhites
Trophies	
League Champions	1950-51, 1960-61
Division 2	1919-20, 1949-50
FA Cup Winners	1901, 1921, 1961, 1962, 1967, 1981, 1982, 1991
League Cup Winners	1971, 1973, 1999, 2008
Charity Shield	1921, 1951, 1961, 1962 and shared in 1967, 1981, 1991
European Cup Winners Cup	1963
UEFA Cup	1972, 1984
League Seasons	
Seasons in Premier League (Top Flight)	83
Seasons in Championship (Tier 2)	16
Seasons in League 1 (Tier 3)	0
Seasons in League 2 (Tier 4)	0

Story Time

The Painting

The Gallery

I could only have seen the painting briefly in passing, as I had done so I hadn't even realised, not even thinking about it. It was only when one of my colleagues had mentioned it to me over lunch one day that it dawned on me; I knew exactly what painting they were talking about and where it was. For some reason, the image must have sub-consciously registered with me.

When I left work that evening, I made a detour from my normal route back to the station, to go to the little gallery where the painting was on display, I had on occasion passed the gallery whilst getting something for lunch, but I had never stopped to look in the window, let alone ventured inside the gallery. Yet, here I was, walking into the little gallery, and over to the painting in the window.

I spent a long time looking at the painting from every angle, not understanding what it was about it that had managed to worm its way inside my head. No one could ever say that I was an art connoisseur, every picture that I had on my walls at home was either music related, or a map. Additionally, I could say with great certainty that I was not usually a fan of this type of abstract work that I was drawn to here. The longer I looked at it, the more I wanted to look at it, I just couldn't explain it, I had to have the painting, and I needed to look at it every day.

I removed my eyes from the canvas so that I could see if I could find out if the work was for sale, at a gallery like this, that wasn't always a certainty. There was no card near the painting that gave any indication of who the artist was, what the painting was called, let alone how much it cost if it was for sale. Unable to find any indication about the painting I made my way over to chrome and glass desk, tucked towards the back-left hand side of the gallery. An angular, well-dressed middle-aged man sat behind the desk, casually flicking through one of a pile of magazines upon it. The man ignored me as I approached the desk, and continued to do so until I spoke.

"Excuse me." I tamely uttered.

The man slowly raised his eyes from the obviously fascinating magazine, eventually making eye contact with me before responding.

"Yes sir, how exactly can I help you?"

The man spoke with a slight accent, one that I couldn't quite place, certainly not with the few words that had come from the man. Mixed in with the words though, was an unhealthy amount of disdain, as if he had sized me up and deemed me unworthy to be in this particular establishment. Even with eight words, there was enough of an undertone to suggest that just because I was dressed in a jeans and t-shirt combination, I couldn't afford anything his gallery offered. Later I would ponder on this, wondering if it wasn't a very clever sales technique to try and goad a perspective buyer into taking an artwork just to prove that underlying sneer wrong.

Composing myself before I spoke, trying not to show that I had noticed the undertone, I took longer to reply than I normally would have done, and eventually managing to squeeze out some words,

"It's about the work in the window to the left of the door, it has piqued my interest, but there doesn't appear to be any details around it. I was wondering whether it is for sale, and if so, how much is it?"

The man gave a reptilian grin as he stood up and flowed around the desk, talking as he made his way over to the painting,

"An intriguing choice, from an immensely intriguing artist. This is the latest in a series of their works we have had the great honour of selling, no one knows anything about the artist at all, they call themselves "Surerandomality", and outside of that I couldn't tell you their gender, age, or nationality, they supply a work of art, we sell it, they supply another. It would appear that they trust us here, as none of their works have gone up for sale at any other gallery, either here in London, or anywhere else across the world as far as we are aware."

"The next interesting thing about their works is that they never come to us with a name, whoever buys the painting gets to name it as they please, and it is always something personal to the buyer. Normally people buy these pieces of art only to sell them on later, by private sale or auction, yet again not one piece from Surerandomality has ever come on the market for resale, almost as if the buyer having named the piece feels too great an affinity with it to let it go."

"Finally, every piece of art within our walls is definitely for sale, we work on commission for the artists, we are not in the business of wasting valuable wall space for vanity projects. As for the price of this work, it depends on the name that a prospective buyer will give it. For all of Surerandomality's works, the buyer gives us the name, we speak to Surerandomality's intermediary, and they give us a price."

"There is no telling what it may be, there was a work that went for just £56, yet another went for £23,000, in every case the price asked for was paid."

"If you are truly interested then you would need to give the painting a name."

I stood stock still, trying to let what I had been told sink in, still transfixed by the painting, before I had a chance to think about a name one word had come out of my mouth.

"Casablanca!"

If the gallery worker was as surprised by the name, as I was with it coming out of my mouth, he didn't show it. There was a hint of a smile before he floated back off to the desk to make a phone call.

I didn't understand why I had blurted the word out, but as I looked at the painting again, it was obvious to me that it screamed the word Casablanca at me, there was something in the painting that made me think of the famous film, but just why was a mystery to me, it didn't make any sense as I hadn't even seen the film. I had heard of the film of course, it was an all-time classic, an Oscar winner if my memory served me right, one of those critically acclaimed films that always got voted into polls of the greatest films of all time. One of those films that everyone had heard of, one that everyone claimed that they had seen, but I did wonder if they actually had, or whether they just said they had because they felt they should have done, but secretly they were just like me in never having seen it. I knew that it had starred Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, and was fairly sure Peter Lorre as well, additionally it was set in the eponymously named city in Morocco during the Second World War, and involved a love triangle and a piano player, but after that I was struggling.

My musing was interrupted by the gallery worker gliding back over to me.

"The artist seemed most amused by the name you had picked, I can't see it myself, but I am not the one buying it. The price is £2,735."

I didn't hesitate, "Sold," the word was out of my mouth quicker than the title for the painting, and I had my wallet out of my pocket as well.

The gallery worker's face flickered a moment of surprise before returning to his normal neutral expression, without a word he removed the painting from its mounting and carefully took it to the back of the gallery. I dumbly followed him, shocked that I was going to spend nearly three grand on a painting; that would be the Victoria record fair out of the window. A pang of doubt tugged at me as I tapped in my pin number to the card machine, there really was no going back now though, and with some words from the gallery worker following me, unable to get to my ears, I wandered out of the gallery with a wrapped painting under my arm wondering what on earth had just happened.

The Commute Home

I put the earphones from my i-pod into my ears and pressed play, I was certain it was supposed to be on one of my pre-set playlists, but it appeared to just be on random play, Public Enemy, Jurassic 5, Soulwax, The Courteeners, Donna Summer, The Four Tops, Lipps Inc, Parliament, The Coyote Sisters, Jakata, a mix of songs where I was familiar with some, and some I hadn't heard for years, certainly not from a playlist. As it kept throwing up random songs, something in the back of my mind was nagging at me, they were loosely linked by a theme, I couldn't be sure without checking, but I had a feeling they were somehow linked to my new painting.

I let the music fade into the background and thought back to the film. For such a classic film, it was strange that someone my age had managed to avoid watching it all my life. My family certainly weren't interested in films, I could count the number of times I went to the cinema as a child on one hand, and things hadn't changed much since leaving home. Very little TV had been watched either, we were very much a musical household, I couldn't play an instrument to save my life, but I had a love of records, and normally I spent all my spare money on them. Every room in the house had racks full of records, some sorted by genre or by record label, some artists were kept separately to others, and then everything else was in alphabetical order. I knew where everything was, even if the system could leave others scratching their heads.

Now I had a painting called "Casablanca", and I would need to find somewhere to hang it, I couldn't think of any obvious space to be able to hang it in, I would need to move one of my existing pictures, I was thinking it would probably need to be the framed print of ancient London that sat over the old fireplace in the living room, the chimney breast would be the best place to show the new painting off.

As I got off my train at Coulsdon South station, and began my walk home; my thoughts were drawn back to the painting. I couldn't believe that I had even considered buying such a thing, let alone spending nearly all the money I had on it. It was almost as if I had been in a fugue state since entering the gallery. Such was the spell the painting cast on me, I was sure that I would have found the way to have paid three times as much.

At Home

I got home and took the painting straight to the living room, taking down my ancient London print to replace it with Casablanca. I glanced over to the record player, surprised to see the lid open, and a record on the turntable, I was quite fastidious about putting records away once played, and I was sure that everything had been squared away when I left for work this morning. I went over to the record player only to find the twelve inch of Vernon Butch – Get Up sat upon it, it was of course on Casablanca records, something I hadn't played in years, but the random selections of my i-pod made sense now, I knew that a number of the tracks it had played were also on Casablanca records, I went back to see what else had been played, and a couple of the tracks were on Morocco records, a mid-eighties Motown spin off, however some of the other tracks didn't make sense, though they were all on the same label as well – PIAS, I couldn't see any link there until I looked at the small print on the Public Enemy single I pulled out of my racks. PIAS stood for "Play It Again Sam" records, a famous quote from the movie Casablanca, everything that had played was linked together, and I just didn't know how it was possible.

I sat down in an armchair in the living room to look at the painting, not moving for what seemed like eternity, transfixed by it, seeing little details coming to life that I hadn't noticed before, it was as if the painting was telling me a story in several chapters. Never had any work of art been able to speak to me like this, it was changing the way I thought about all I could see.

My world of whimsy was interrupted by the television coming to life, my house surprising me again, again I was sure that I had turned the television off at the mains the night before, yet here it was playing all by itself. What was on it was even more amazing to me, a picture of the White House with a news ticker tape running underneath, clashed with the words from the continuity announcer,

“Up next in a change from our advertised programming, we bring you the classic black and white film, Casablanca, starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman, we will return to our correspondent in Washington DC to catch up on the breaking news story after the film.”

Here was my chance to watch the film I had never seen before, I had never believed in co-incidences, and there was too much happening here to be co-incidental, I glanced at the painting as the film started, beginning to get an uneasy sensation. Something else about the television coming on at that time was gnawing at me as well, the image of the White House meant something as well, but even racking my brain I couldn't fathom why.

My focus on the film wasn't the greatest, I kept switching between watching the film and looking at my new painting, almost as if it was whispering to me "look at me", I wondered if it was because I was a philistine where films were concerned and that I wasn't finding Casablanca to be as good as it was cracked up to be. As the film ended I knew why the painting made me think of the film, even though I had never seen it, it was a still from the film, only in colour and in abstract. The continuity announcer came back on over the end credits of the film, and put me out of my misery about why the White House had triggered my mind to go to work; it was of course a literal translation from the Spanish Casablanca – house white!

How had this painting managed to make my whole world to revolve around it? I looked back to the painting hung on the wall, it seemed as if it had grown bigger since I had hung it there, it took over the whole of the chimney breast now, I found myself staring at a section of the painting that represented a window on the plane, I could see a person in it, the closer I looked, the more it looked like me, until I became convinced it was me, it was me staring out of the plane window at me in my living room. As this thought entered my head, so it became so, I found myself sat on the plane, looking out of the window, looking in to a strange kaleidoscope view of my living room, looking at me stood in front of the fireplace, watching me disappear from view, I was now on that plane and I would never be leaving.

Epilogue

Surerandomality smiled to their self, knowing that their work had moved another person to his alternative dimension, they placed their new painting into the space vacated by Casablanca, they may never tell the gallery owners what the paintings were called, but the paintings always told their victims, granting them their final wish.

Puzzle Corner

Quiz

It's the 7x7 quiz, name the 7 answers or items that make or answer up the 7 questions or sets below.

1. Wonders of the ancient world.
2. Members of the Secret Seven.
3. The seas referred to in the saying "Sail the seven seas."
4. Colours of the rainbow.
5. Michael Jackson's solo UK number one hit singles (not ones with the Jackson 5 or Jacksons)
6. Dwarves.
7. The losing team in the seven FA Cup Finals that Chelsea have won.

Crossword

Angry!

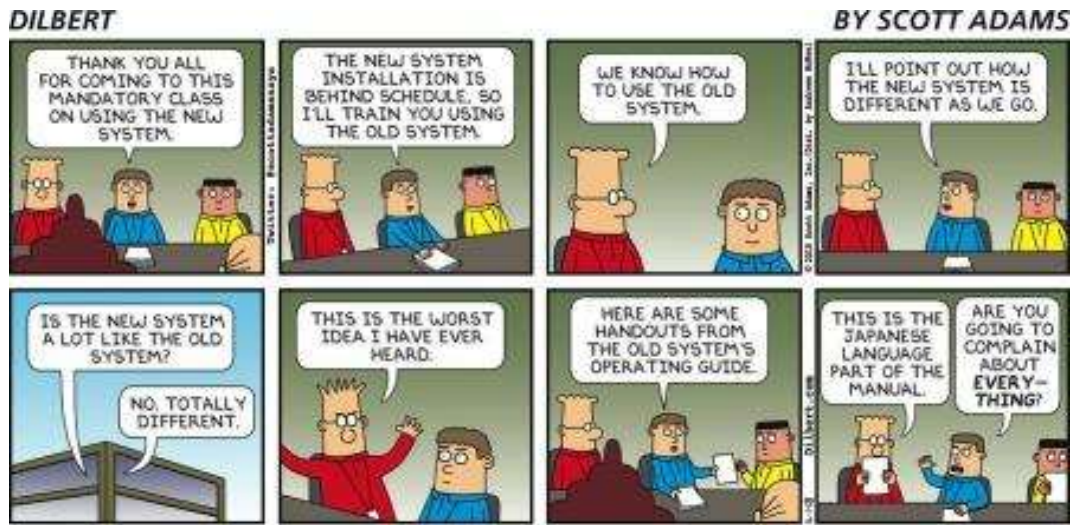
Sudoku

			6		5		1	
	5	1	2	3		7		
6	8						2	3
9			4			2		
		4		2		3		
	1	3			6			4
	2					1		5
		7		5	9	8		
	4		7					9

Wordsearch

Don't worry, I've found it now.

Dilbert



Epilogue

If you want to catch up on old issues, Drabbles I've had published, or the random scribbling from a bored mind on my blog then they are all available at <http://www.onetruekev.co.uk/>
Sign up to the mailing list on the home page there.